

MYSTIC EAST

...an unexplored horizon

A bi-monthly magazine by HRAEI | Vol 4 | Issue 6 | November - December 2018



Holiday Inn Resort Kolkata NH6



Zone by the Park, Kolkata

KOLKATA RISING

Two brand new properties make their debut in the city as Kolkata registers a positive RevPar and a hopping 72 per cent occupancy, says survey



VISION

- ✌️ Make the Eastern Region comprising 12 States and a Union Territory a flourishing destination for domestic and foreign tourists by projecting their captivating tourism assets.
- ✌️ Promoting best industry practices and setting benchmarks for industry constituents.

MISSION

- ✌️ A common voice for hotels, restaurants and associates for unhindered progress of the hospitality industry in the country's Eastern Region.
- ✌️ Create value for members by ensuring government policies remain supportive of tourism and the industry.





In the 2018 Indian Hospitality Trends and Opportunities report by Hotelivate, the Eastern India, specifically Kolkata, has clocked the highest increase in supply in the major markets across the country, compared to the previous fiscal.

The city witnessed its first positive RevPAR growth of approximately 3 per cent in four years in 2017/18, registering an estimated occupancy of 72 per cent and an average rate of about Rs 6,100. More specifically, the two micro-markets of the city demonstrated varying operating performance owing to their unique characteristics of supply and demand. City hotels major demand segments are commercial and leisure whereas major demand segments for hotels located alongside Eastern-Periphery are commercial and MICE. The hotels located in Central Business District witnessed a higher ADR than

“

Kolkata, clocked the highest increase in supply in the major markets across the country, compared to the previous fiscal.

”

the hotels located in Salt Lake City, Rajarhat and E.M Bypass.

Over 20 per cent increase in supply has been attributed to sporting events, economic and infrastructural growth, rising air traffic and the advent of submarkets – which has aided the absorption of a significantly faster supply. The report forecasts that Kolkata would continue to witness a healthy growth in occupancies in the near term.

This is not surprising as the city has been in the process of re-inventing itself in the past decade. Kolkata possesses several attributes that can contribute to its potential success going forward, and connectivity is one of them. In addition to being India's gateway to the East Northeast and the Andaman & Nicobar Islands, the city links India to Bangladesh, Bhutan, China and Southeast Asia.

Pranav Singh
President, HRAEI



“

The industry is becoming extremely conscious of the need for direct interaction between the Chef and the Guest.

”

It's been a couple of decades since cooks were turned into Celebrity Chefs. Now the cult of these star chefs has transformed the restaurant industry and the Chef's role has undergone a huge makeover. Today, the Chef is more proactive. He comes over to the table, speaks with the guests, understands their priorities, comes up with suggestions and presents a meal.

The phenomenon is encouraged by hotels as well as the standalone restaurants. More particularly, food and beverage managers encourage their restaurant chefs to interact with guests. It is an interesting fact that the industry is becoming extremely conscious of the need for this direct interaction between the Chef and the guest. India's hospitality players have inculcated this practice as an essential part of in the training process of Chefs.

Today, employers have also made note of bringing in more proactive and extrovert Chefs into the team to help initiate the practice among employees. This exposure is very essential for the Chefs who can then use it to their advantage when they progress in the industry. This benefits the F&B industry immensely in the long run.

Mr Mohammed Azhar
Secretary, HRAEI

MYSTIC EAST

A BI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE BY HRAEI
Vol 4 | Issue 6 | November - December 2018

EDITORIAL BOARD

SUDESH PODDAR
CHAIRMAN, ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE, HRAEI

PRANAV SINGH
PRESIDENT, HRAEI

MOHAMMED AZHAR
HONORARY SECRETARY, HRAEI

GOPAL DAS AGARWAL
VICE PRESIDENT

S. H. RAHMAN
MANAGING COMMITTEE MEMBER

BIRGIT ELLY HOLM
GENERAL MANAGER
HYATT REGENCY KOLKATA

EDITOR
ATIKRAM GUPTA

EDITORIAL CONSULTANT
SUSMIT BARMAN

CHIEF DESIGNER
SOMU DUTTA

'Mystic East' magazine is printed and published by Atikram Gupta on behalf of Hotel and Restaurant Association of Eastern India.

Printed at CDC Printers Private Limited, No.45, Radha Nath Chowdhury Road, Tangra Industrial Estate-II, Kolkata, West Bengal 700 015

Hotel and Restaurant Association of Eastern India, 18A/1, Everest, 18th Floor, 46C, Chowringhee Road, Kolkata- 700 071;
Telephone- +91 33 2288-1742/43, 40035993.
E-mail: info@hraei.co.in
Website: www.hraei.co.in

THIS ISSUE OF MYSTIC EAST CONTAINS 56 PAGES INCLUDING COVER AND BACK COVER

All information in Mystic East magazine is derived from sources we consider reliable and a sincere effort is made to report accurate information. The publisher regrets that he cannot accept liability for error and omissions contained in this publication that might have crept in inadvertently. Similarly, opinions/views expressed by third parties are not necessarily shared by the magazine. However, we wish to advise our readers that one or more recognised authorities may hold different views than those reported. Material used in this publication is intended for information purpose only. Readers are advised to seek specific advice before acting on information contained in this publication which is provided for general use, and may not be appropriate for the readers' particular circumstances..

No part of the magazine may be reproduced, stored in retrieval system or transmitted in any form without the permission of the publication in writing. The same rule applies when there is a copyright or the article is taken from another publication. An exemption is hereby granted for the extract used for the purpose of fair review, provided two copies of the same publication are sent to us for our records. Publications reproducing material either in part or in whole, without permission could face legal action. The publisher assumes no responsibility for returning any material, solicited or unsolicited, nor is he responsible for material lost or damaged.



The unmistakable growth headwinds can be seen in the Indian hospitality industry, iterates the 21st annual edition of the Indian Hotel Industry Survey by The Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations (FHRAI). A few snapshots of the 2017-2018 survey – done in co-operation with two new knowledge partners, STR and Horwath HTL—is presented as following:

- Occupancy of 68.2%, reflects a very significant 6.4 points growth over the previous year; healthy growth is reflected across segments – occupancy decline for the 5 star deluxe segment is attributable to participation composition.
- ADR of Rs. 5,203 for 2017-18 reflects 15.4% growth over the previous year; however growth is a more sedate 1.6% if compared with ADR for FHRAI Indian Hotel Industry Survey 2015-16.
- The supply increases of the past few years have kept room rates continue to remain soft – ADR for 5 star deluxe hotels is below Rs. 9.5k; 5 star hotels only Rs. 5.7k and 4 star hotels at 4.1k. This reflects India as a very affordable destination, although tourism numbers have not grown in a commensurate manner.
- 3 star hotels ADR at Rs. 3.6k shows 18% ADR increase over the previous year; while rates have certainly improved, we suggest that all-India growth is more towards the mid 'single-digit' level.

So far so good, but what's more encouraging is the fact that significant contributors to the new growth trajectory is the F&B and banqueting section which has contributed significantly (at 42.3 % of total revenue). Interestingly, revenue contribution from F&B outlets increases for the 4 star and lower category hotels which reflects the revenue potential from F&B in markets outside the big cities. Three star hotels also have the highest revenue contribution from banqueting and conferences . Of critical relevance is that revenue from F&B outlets contributes 37.8% revenue to hotels with up to 50 rooms; this is higher than the total F&B contribution (outlets plus banquets) at hotels of larger size. Together with banquets, hotels with up to 50 rooms, get half their revenue from F&B operations.

The statistics proves beyond doubt that F&B is the new growth engine for smaller hotels. It also stresses the fact banquets generate substantial revenue. So even if you are a small operator focus on the MICE segment. Look for weddings, meetings and conferences to strengthen your revenue.

Mr Sudesh Poddar

Chairman, Administrative Committee, HRAEI

Cover Story

November - December 2018

28

**KOLKATA
MEANS
BUSINESS**

The city not only witnessed its positive RevPar growth of 3 per cent but registered an estimated occupancy of 72 per cent



8

▪ **NEWS**

HRAEI stops taking bookings from Goibibo and Makemytrip

10

Indian hotel industry to grow at 9-10 per cent in the next four years, says ICRA

12

Study by Fairmont shows affluent travellers want exclusive experiences, views hotels as trusted travel partners



14

IRCTC Likely to Set-up Pod Hotel for Railway Passengers in Mumbai

16

▪ **EAT RIGHT MOVEMENT**



FSSAI wants calorie count on restaurant menu to promote healthy habits

19

▪ **ONLINE REVIEWS**



Here's a look at how to deal with critical comments posted on various travel websites

24

▪ **THE FUN QUOTIENT**

Ways to keep hospitality entertaining and reinforcing the clear vision that it's fun to be in this sector



34

▪ **BIG DATA, BIG BUSINESS**

It's not just for the IT industry, the field of big data analytics is transforming the hospitality industry



40

▪ **HELLO WHAT'S COOKING**

As chef-guest interaction becomes prevalent in Indian restaurants we track its genesis and advantages



44

▪ **MOMENTUM JHARKHAND**

Nestled amongst the Chotanagpur Plateau and dotted with lush forests, Jharkhand has emerged as a surprise challenger in the tourism industry



HRAEI STOPS TAKING BOOKINGS FROM GOIBIBO AND MAKEMYTRIP

THE Hotel & Restaurant Association of Eastern India (HRAEI) has decided to stop taking bookings from Goibibo and Makemytrip (MMT), two online travel portals, for charging heavy commissions from hotel owners and offering indiscriminate discounts to customers through their platforms. The decision to stop honouring the bookings from these two online travel agents (OTAs) was unanimously taken by the Managing Committee members of HRAEI on December 27th in Kolkata..

“Following the meeting held among the Managing Committee members of HRAEI, the decision was taken that the bookings from Goibibo-MMT shall not be honoured, after 15th January 2019,” said Pranav Singh, the President of HRAEI. “Accordingly all fellow members have

been asked not to honour Goibibo-MMT bookings from 16th January 2019 and have been asked to terminate their contract with Goibibo-MMT immediately.”

Hospitality industry associations across the country have been opposing major OTAs who charge heavy commissions from them and the hefty discounts they offer to consumers. These online booking portals initially charged between 15 and 18 per cent as commissions, but the figure has now climbed to over 40 per cent. “Initially online bookings had been beneficial to both sides—the hotel owners and the online booking platforms. But in the recent times it has been lopsided due to high-handedness of some specific OTAs, such as Goibibo-MMT, and has been eating up revenues of our member hotels,”

said Mr Singh.

To resolve the disparity, HRAEI had convened a meeting of its Committee Members on 6th December 2018, wherein Senior Managers of Goibibo-MMT were also invited. “The main agenda of the meeting, was discussion on reduction of the commission and discounting of the hotel rates arbitrarily, by Goibibo-MMT, along with some other related issues,” said Singh. “Following the meeting, a letter was issued to Goibibo-MMT on 8th December 2018, wherein the association had raised pertinent points for consideration by Goibibo-MMT. The time line of 10 days was given to them for their appropriate response to the association.”

Goibibo-MMT sent an e-mail on 14th December 2018, stating that

they would not deal with HRAEI directly on these matters and would rather deal directly with individual hotels with respect to their bookings. Thereafter another meeting of the Managing Committee members was convened on 27th December 2018 at Association office at Everest House, Chowringhee Road, Kolkata, wherein the zonal head of Goibibo-MMT was also invited for discussion, but he did not attend the meeting, stating that they have

already expressed the company's decision through e-mail.

Following this the HRAEI decided to stop honouring bookings by Goibibo-MMT after 15th January, 2019. "However, guests who have been booked through Goibibo-MMT later than 16th January 2109 will not be harassed and they will be given accommodation in the hotels. However, those guests will be requested to make payments directly to the hotel," said Singh.

course of action.

The hotels however, have declined to accept the offers and have demanded for the two entities to conduct business that's ethical and uniform across the country without distorting the markets and address all concerns raised by hoteliers. Hotels in all major Indian States and Cities have come together and have unanimously agreed to maintain the stance. The hotels through their respective City and State chapters have united under the country's apex hospitality body – FHRAI to represent their voice.

"We have sent a fresh notice to Golbibo and MMT to immediately stop contacting individual hoteliers, and offering them customised terms. We once again are requesting them to meet us as was initially agreed, to discuss and finalise uniform and mutually acceptable terms of ethical business practices without disrupting the livelihoods of local hoteliers. In the meanwhile, we have also intimated the hotel fraternity that no agreement has yet come through and to not fall prey to any prospective offers made by them which do not address their issues in its entirety," says Gurbaxish Singh Kohli, Vice-President, FHRAI & President – Hotel and Restaurant Association of Western India (HRAWI).

"We have waited for the OTAs to hold talks with us and amicably resolve the conflict. But we haven't received even a hint from them on how they wish to take things forward. We do not wish for this internal dispute to affect the experience and expectations of guests/tourists. We are hoping that the two entities will revert to our latest notice, and in the meanwhile we have decided to convene a meeting in the Capital to finalise the next course of action in case the situation remains status quo," concludes Kohli.

ODISHA HOTELIERS BLACKLIST OTA

THE Hotel and Restaurant Association of Odisha (HRAO) has blacklisted online Travel Aggregator (OTA) Go-MMT/IBIBO and decided not to honour their booking vouchers after January 15. The decision was taken at the annual general meeting of the association after authorities of the OTA failed to come forward to negotiate on its commission despite several reminders.

Chairman of HRAO JK Mohanty said the Go-MMT is unethically exploiting independent hotels by charging a whopping 45 per cent whereas its commission from certain chain hotels is as less as eight per cent. "It has been charging exorbitantly under the pretext of money in bank, performance-linked bonus and logged-in customers besides introducing various carnivals. This can lead to collapse of the hotel industry," he said.

On December 6, the hoteliers' body had an emergency meeting on the issues relating to unethical trade practices followed by Go-MMT. CEO of Go-MMT was served a seven-day notice to come forward for negotiation and resolve the issue amicably.

But instead of coming for negotiations, Mohanty said the CEO of the OTA refused to acknowledge the locus standi of the Federation of Hotel and Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI) and other regional associations. "We have decided that all individual hotels will serve a 15-day notice to terminate agreements with Go-MMT/IBIBO. All independent hotels in the State will not honour their booking vouchers from January 15 onwards," he informed. The HRAO warned that electronic or computerised signature will not be acceptable anymore by independent hotels.

OTAS AND HOTELS IN A DEADLOCK

IN the two weeks since the Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI) put the Online Travel Aggregators (OTAs) MakeMyTrip and Golbibo (Go-MMT) and the hotel room aggregator – OYO on notice, individual hoteliers have been approached by the OTAs for renegotiating terms.

The apex body has stated that Go-MMT has not indicated any intent of resolution and so, has decided to call for an internal meeting to initiate the next

INDIAN HOTEL INDUSTRY SET TO GROW AT 9-10% OVER THE NEXT FOUR YEARS: ICRA

THE Indian hotel industry witnessed its highest ever 10 year occupancy in FY2018 and its revenue per available room (RevPAR) was higher by 17 per cent compared to the 10 year low, witnessed in FY2014. Similarly, the pan-India average room rate (ARR) which stood at INR 5,800 in FY2018 was also the highest since FY2014 as per ICRA spokesperson.

The main concerns faced by the players remain fund availability and other case specific factors stemming from heightened competition in the property micro-market, poor revenue management, delayed projected commissioning and overleveraged capex / acquisitions of the past.

Commenting further, Pavethra Ponniah, vice president and sector head, corporate sector ratings, ICRA, says, "The ARR's have slowly but steadily started to improve on a pan-India basis as more cities witnessed a modest uptick in ARR's; ARR's are estimated at an average INR 5,500, up by 1-2 per cent for H1 FY2019. Further this improvement in ARR's has been aided by healthy occupancy improvement. The pan India RevPAR's were INR 3,500 during H1 FY2019 (INR 3,400 in H1 FY2018) and also registered a modest growth. RevPAR's improvement continued to be driven by uptick in ARR's and occupancy. All key markets witnessed improvement in RevPAR's and all India occupancy at 64 per cent was higher by 2 per cent. The Y-O-Y growth in RevPAR was around 4-4.5 per cent. Going forward given the muted pan-India room supply on one hand and robust demand for rooms

on the other hand, occupancy is expected to be healthy and will drive ARR recovery. ICRA expects an 5-6 per cent growth in RevPAR's in FY2019, the highest since FY2012."

FTAs into India slowed down from April 2018 onwards due to the Nipah virus scare and diversion of traffic to other global events such as the soccer world cup in Russia. While the FTA growth picked up in Aug 2018, the Kerala floods impacted FTA growth in Sep 2018 and Oct 2018. Kerala witnessed FTAs decline in Q2 (-4.6 per cent) and Q3 CY2018 (-13.6 per

cent). In addition, there was general weakness in the global ITAs during Q3 CY2018.

As for the domestic demand momentum, it has remained strong; the domestic revenue passenger kilometre (RPKM), a proxy for domestic travel grew by a robust 20.3 per cent Y-o-Y in YTD October CY2018 at 10.5 million passengers. Domestic demand in FY2019 will continue to be driven by increased air connectivity, and higher appetite for domestic leisure travel.

On the supply side, the supply of





room is likely to lag demand over the medium term and grow at a subdued CAGR of 3.6 per cent over the next five years (FY19-23). The number of premium rooms across 12 key cities is likely to go up from 82,800 in FY2018 to 98,900 as on FY2023e, with ICRA research tracking about 16,100 premium rooms under construction and to be launched over the next five years. This low supply growth is expected to be the backbone for the current up-cycle, as demand is expected to grow at a much faster rate.

Industry revenues (ICRA's sample of 12 companies) which have remained subdued over the previous few quarters, despite the pan India improvement in RevPAR, due to multifarious issues such as demonetisation, liquor ban along the highways, the GST rollout, and certain

company-specific events such as renovations, revived strongly during Q2FY2019. Quarterly revenue was at a seven-year high in Q2 FY2019 with the same growing by 12 per cent over Q2 FY2018; the operating profit margin (OPM) was at a six-year Q2 high at 11.8 per cent, improving by 280 bps Y-o-Y.

Going forwards, ICRA expects revenue improvement and margin expansion for the industry. The CAGR growth is expected to be 9-10 per cent over the next four years, with a strong 10-12 per cent during FY2019. Margins are likely to expand due to operating leverage, with return of stronger revenue growth. Interest and debt cover are likely to improve gradually over the medium term but Return on capital employed (RoCE) is expected to remain at sub-cost of

capital at least till FY2020. RoCE is expected to improve upwards of 15 per cent in FY2023, from 6.3 per cent in FY2018 to 9 per cent in FY2019E and 16.3 per cent in FY2013E.

Adds Ponniah, "Poised in the first few years of the upcycle, ICRA expects the current industry up-cycle to continue over the next 3-4 years and ICRA's outlook continues to be stable. The stable outlook will be driven by robust domestic demand and a muted supply pipeline. The return of pricing power across key markets will be more evident from the next rate cycle in January 2019 and a consequent improvement in financial performance is expected. However, costs will need tight monitoring."

Source: Express Food & Hospitality World

STUDY BY FAIRMONT SHOWS AFFLUENT TRAVELLERS WANT EXCLUSIVE EXPERIENCES, VIEWS HOTELS AS TRUSTED TRAVEL PARTNERS



F AIRMONT Hotels and Resorts led Luxury Insights Report reveals that affluent travellers perceive hotels and resorts as established authorities and trusted travel guides. With a focus on Gateway to Home- Hotels as the Heart of their Communities, this latest volume is in a series of ongoing research-led, data-driven reports on

luxury travel trends.

The newly commissioned study found that hotels are perceived as pillars in their community, connecting guests, whether from abroad or locally, to the true character of the destination. Luxury travellers view the role of a hotel beyond curating authentic local experiences. It is the

combination of destination expertise and recreating the comforts of home that creates this trusted relationship and positions the most desirable hotels in the world at the very heart of the travel experience.

Sharon Cohen, vice president, Fairmont Hotels & Resorts, stated, "Fairmont properties share a special

connection to their communities and part of our brand promise is to preserve these diverse and picturesque locations while enhancing their overall welfare. This guiding principle is inherent to our brand's culture and was the impetus for us undertaking this study to further inform and validate the important role a hotel, specifically a Fairmont property, plays within the local community and how guests, whether abroad or local, perceive them."

The report is based on data uncovered from Fairmont's 2018 Global Luxury Traveller Insights Study, an online survey of 2,725 luxury travellers from France, United States, Canada, United Kingdom, Germany, China, and United Arab Emirates. Industry leaders across the globe, including consumer experience futurists, sustainability strategists, association leaders and travel company presidents shared their perspectives on the findings to round out the report and facilitate a discussion around innovation leadership and the integral role of experience in the travel sector. Their insights and perspectives will also be explored further in a new Leaders on Luxury video series, which will feature a mix of Fairmont, AccorHotels and other industry experts commenting on the state of the luxury market.

The study reveals that guests look to luxury hotels as a key aspect of their travel experience. The influence of hotels goes beyond the traditional expectation of having a place to sleep at night, with guests looking to hotels to provide immersive experiences that are sustainably viable and meet the needs of their entire family.

Highlights

Exclusive experiences: travellers prioritize experiences over brands, with two out of three considering it

important to have experiences not readily available to everyone (65%).

Destination insiders: eighty-nine percent of those surveyed said that the best hotels have colleagues that are familiar with the area and can provide the inside scoop on things only the locals know.

The hotel factor: ninety-three percent of luxury travellers consider the hotel an important part of the vacation experience – so much so that over half (59%) feel that hotel options influence their choice of destination.

Generation green: eighty-four percent of respondents consider it important that the hotel provides recommendations of experiences that are not detrimental to the local community. Guests recognize over-tourism as a growing concern and that changes need to be made if the beauty that attracts them to worldwide destinations is going to last; travellers look to luxury hotels to help drive change that is positive and sustainable.

No flight required: luxury hotels are not just for the jet-set. For 77%,

these remarkable properties provide a memorable option for social and business occasions in their hometown. As pillars in their communities, locals seek these institutions to celebrate momentous occasions and create family traditions.

Community connection: seasoned travellers understand the impact of tourism within a destination. Four out of five think environmentally sustainable practices and locally sourced kitchen ingredients are important.

Cohen, added, "It comes as no surprise that our latest research uncovered the central role Fairmont hotels play in connecting guests to the local community. As the Fairmont footprint expands to new markets around the world, we will continue to invest in understanding the motivations of our guests and the local communities in which we operate to ensure we are anticipating their desires and adapting to their needs."

Source: Express Food & Hospitality World



IRCTC LIKELY TO SET-UP POD HOTEL FOR RAILWAY PASSENGERS IN MUMBAI



INDIAN Railway Catering Tourism Corporation Limited (IRCTC), in a rather innovative move, is planning to bring a next-generation format of lodging – pod hotels – for railway passengers. IRCTC has proposed setting up of a pod hotel near the Mumbai Central railway station.

The corporation wants to offer affordable, comfortable stopover options with more amenities than the usual retiring rooms. Pinakin Morawala, spokesperson for IRCTC said that they are planning a 30-pod capsule hotel. "The proposal is in nascent stages and the land has been identified. We are now awaiting approval from Western Railway before sanctioning a feasibility study," he added.

"The capsule concept will be one-of-a-kind with ultra-modern, smart amenities available to passengers. This construction proposal is part of a wave of innovative ideas to enhance passenger experience," Morawala added.

According to multiple reports, the pods will offer facilities such as temperature and light control, personal lockers, USB ports and power sockets, intercoms, entertainment screens, Wi-Fi, etc. There will also be dining, washroom, lounge and changing room facilities in the hotel.

Each pod is likely to be 5 feet by 7 feet, Morawala said. He added that a hotel room costs much more but a pod will have all the essential com-

forts for a 7-8 hour stay time.

This is a concept that has mushroomed all over the world, including Mumbai. The city already has India's first pod capsule hotel, called Urban-pod that opened for business in 2017.

IRCTC is looking to open similar spaces near major stations if this pod hotel manages to take off. Morawala admitted that it is too early to put an estimate on the cost of the project. As for the tariffs Morawala said that it depends on the number of hours a pod is used. While the rates are usually around INR 2,500, Morawala said that it is too early to decide what IRCTC will charge.

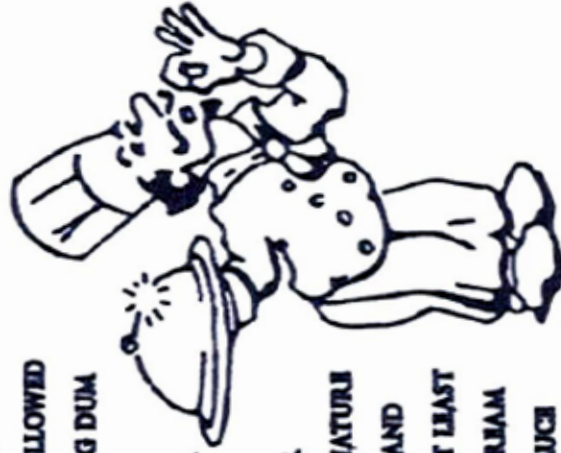
(Source: Business Today)

JOIN US AT PETER CAT
FOR A MEAL PREPARED
IN THE TRUE HONOURED
TRADITION OF INDIA. BEGIN WITH
A FISH MAKHMALI AND A
TANDOORI BROCCOLI FOLLOWED
BY THE MOUTH WATERING DUM
KI RAAN. A PORTION OF
VEGETABLE MALAI KOFTA
OR IF YOU PREFER OUR
CHICKEN RISHMI BUTTER
MASALA. THEN OUR SIGNATURE
ORIGINAL CHELO KEBAB AND
LAST BUT CERTAINLY NOT LEAST
A MERINGUE WITH ICE CREAM
AND HOT CHOCOLATE SAUCE
TO MAKE YOUR LUNCH AND
DINNER COMPLETE EVERY
COURSE A SPECIAL TREAT.
EVERYDAY AT PETER CAT.



18A, PARK STREET, KOLKATA-700016, INDIA
+91-33-22298841, +91-33-22172942
INFO@HERITAGEDINING.IN

IN CALCUTTA THIS IS WHAT PEOPLE MEAN BY A WELL-BALANCED MEAL



JOIN US AT MOCAMBO
FOR A MEAL PREPARED IN THE TRUE
HONOURED TRADITION OF EUROPE.
BEGIN WITH A DEVILLED CRAB,
GARLIC HERB PRAWNS, FOLLOWED
BY A CHICKEN PAPRIKA, CHICKEN TIRAZZINI
AND ASPARAGUS CREAM, ELSE A VEGETABLE ALA KIVY
OR IF YOU PREFER OUR BECKTY MEUNIER,
LOBSTER THERMIDOR, AND LAST BUT NOT LEAST
A BAKED ALASKA TO MAKE YOUR
LUNCH AND DINNER COMPLETE
EVERY COURSE A SPECIAL TREAT.
EVERYDAY AT MOCAMBO.

Mocambo's

25B, PARK STREET, KOLKATA-700016, INDIA
+91-33-22290095, +91-33-22654300
INFO@HERITAGEDINING.IN



CALORIE COUNTER

HEALTHY FOOD

EAT RIGHT MOVEMENT

FSSAI wants calorie count on restaurant menu to promote healthy habits. But will it be effective in India?

► Restaurants have been advised to help consumers in making informed choices through calorie information labelling



► **As more people are eating out more frequently these days, restaurant food easily comes under the scanner for their high calories**

MORE people are eating out more frequently these days even as meals offered by restaurants—both large-chain and local stand-alones—have come under the scanner for their high calories. India's food regulator has asked restaurants to voluntarily print calorie counts on their menus to promote healthy eating habits, as is done in the west, but they say it will be a challenge as recipes are not standardised and ingredient quantities keep changing.

The authority has also asked e-commerce and retail companies to promote healthy options such as fortified foods on their landing pages and checkout counters. "This is a way to nudge food companies to do something which is in the interest of the health of the nation," said Pawan Agarwal, chief executive of

the Food Safety and Standard Authority of India (FSSAI), adding that it was a part of its Eat Right Movement.

This will include commitments from food companies on reformulation of their products with less salt and sugar besides elimination of trans fats in a phased manner. Restaurants will be required to promote safe and healthy eating practices and help consumers in making informed choices through calorie information labelling.

They will also be required to voluntarily include low fat, salt and sugar variants on the menu. It will be a stiff challenge to assign calories to dishes, said representatives of restaurants and food chains across the country.

The recipes of dishes on the menu in a restaurant are not standardised, so it will be a huge challenge to mention

calorie count of dishes on the menu. The quantity of ingredients in the same dish may vary from day to day.

Meals at fast-food restaurants have very little nutritional content, and are high on sodium and calories, reasons they are linked with obesity. A typical six-inch paneer tikka sandwich at Subway with dressing is about 700 calories. This is about the same that four slices of a Margherita personal pan pizza from Pizza Hut will have and slightly more than the 634 calories a McSpicy Paneer Burger from McDonald's has.

However, more people are eating out more frequently even as meals offered by restaurants—both large-chain and local stand-alones—come under the scanner for their high calories.

A typical home-cooked breakfast is 600-700 calories, lunch is 800 calories



► **Traditional Indian food usually comprises a well-balanced diet**

and dinner is 700-800 calories, according to research at National Institute of Nutrition (NIN), Hyderabad. Whereas, if you eat out or order-in, a typical meal will have at least 30% more calories on account of higher sugar and fat content. Moreover, if we take into account the large portions that are served, and the side dishes, dessert and beverages, the calorie count keeps mounting.

In 2017, NIN's National Nutrition Monitoring Bureau came out with its urban nutrition report based on a survey of 53,000 urban households from 16 states. The report, which looked at the diets and nutritional status of urban households, noted that nearly 35-50% of urban men and women are overweight and suffering from obesity-related problems. Moreover, one in every three persons is suffering from hypertension and hyperlipidaemia. One in every four persons has diabetes.

According to the study, chronic lifestyle diseases have doubled over a period of 10 years as people lead sedentary lifestyles, consume more refined food,

oils and sugar, and eat out more. At least 30% of the people surveyed were eating out twice a week. This a decade ago was probably limited to once a month or to important occasions.

Packaged food companies in India have been displaying the ingredients, calories and nutritional contents on the packs since 2010. Now, for the last one year, the food regulator has asked restaurants to voluntarily print calorie counts on their menus as it looks to promote healthy eating habits.

The food regulator has also proposed to limit the maximum trans fat content in vegetable oils, vegetable fat and hydrogenated vegetable oil to 2% by weight as part of its goal to make India trans fat-free by 2022. The regulator has invited the top food companies, QSR chains, oil companies and organised retailers to join the self-regulation exercise.

Currently, Subway, McDonald's and Pizza Hut give information on the calories per dish in a nutrition chart or alongside the dishes on their website.

However, none of the fast-food chains or even any of the smaller restaurant chains or stand-alone restaurants display calorie count on their restaurant menu boards or alongside the name and price of the item on the menu.

Earlier this year in May, the US Food and Drug Administration mandated restaurant chains with 20 or more locations to display calories clearly and prominently on menus and menu boards next to the name/price of the food or drink. The regulation in the US had also met with a lot of resistance. It was implemented almost 15 years after being first mooted by the US Congress.

To be sure, there is no consensus on whether calory labelling on food menus is effective in promoting healthy behaviour, according to the Cochrane Review, an independent scientific network's February report based on its analysis of 28 already published studies on the topic of nutrition labelling in restaurants. At most, people may reduce their consumption by 50 calories or 8% of a 600-calory meal, noted the review.

All the same, the impact of labelling should not be measured by the immediate impact it has on consumers' choice of food or behaviour. The policy works on multiple levels. In Seattle, where it was introduced in 2009, it contributed to improving consumer awareness and use of nutrition information. Additionally, some restauranteurs also reformulated their foods to have fewer calories, researchers wrote in a 2015 issue of the American Journal of Public Health.

Fighting obesity won't happen with voluntary or even mandatory disclosures alone. It will require implementing many more measures like reduction of salt and sugar in our food—perhaps even a rethink on how we order and consume food. It will need awareness. Disclosures are a start.



► The hospitality industry should embrace online reviews as an opportunity for constructive exchange

REPUTATION MANAGEMENT

WHY ONLINE REVIEWS MATTER

Here's a look at how to deal with critical comments posted on various travel websites

ONLINE reviews have become a major force in the hotel selection process. Most travellers will use online sources to review hotels and other tourism operators during their decision making. Reviews are thought of as a trust-

worthy source of information and travellers can form a better picture of the property than they could by just looking at the official marketing communication or asking their direct peers.

Some hoteliers still see reviews,

especially negative reviews, as a burden and are coming to terms with how to use them to improve their business. Our research suggests that hotels should embrace online reviews as an opportunity for constructive exchange. Hotels that not only moni-



► Sometimes the guests may continuously check whether the experience meets, exceeds, or fails to meet their expectations

tor and respond to them, rapidly and honestly, but also improve on the root causes of the negative reviews will come out winners in the long run.

So, like it or not, for most hotels the question is not whether to monitor and respond to online reviews – this is unavoidable – but how and with which additional measures. Large hotel operators will have dedicated people, or even teams, to monitor reviews and respond directly to guests. Often, these operators will have KPIs that determine how quickly and by whom the individual property must respond. Both positive and negative comments are an opportunity to start a conversation and engage with the guest.

However, the external response to the actual comment is only one part of the smart hotel's response to online reviews. The other is the internal learning and further measures taken. To understand the need for

both types of responses more easily, we frame them as part of the review response cycle.

Guest expectations are the starting and end point for the cycle, because guests enter any service situation with an expectation in mind. These expectations are generated through previous experience with the product, the brand, start rating, marketing communications, word-of-mouth, price, and, of course, online reviews. Guests will book hotels that they expect to meet their need for the particular trip. The higher the expectations are, the more the hotel needs to offer in order to satisfy the guest.

During the service experience, the guest will continuously check whether the experience meets, exceeds, or fails to meet their expectations. A single bad experience during an otherwise smooth hotel experience can taint the rest of the experience and leave a negative overall impression.

An unfriendly bellboy, misplaced luggage, a dirty room, a spilled espresso, or a long wait for a room-service meal can all be reason for disappointment. This evaluation is highly subjective and is the individual guest's perception of how well the service was delivered, based on both physical and service aspects. Although the perception is very individual, the negative comments can be broken down into the following larger categories.

Physical: Dirty facilities; Non-functioning facilities or equipment; Old facilities; Missing facilities

Service: Service mistakes; Unprofessional service; Service delays; Missing services (e.g. in room dining).

Whether they were delighted or disappointed, today's guests will want to share their experience. They might do this through word-of-mouth, online networks, or in many cases through online review sites. This is lucky for hotels, because

they can tap into these reviews and respond to them.

As previously outlined, guest satisfaction is linked to how well the expectation was met.

Therefore, the first question a hotelier needs to answer is: “was the dissatisfaction the consequence of an incorrect/heightened expectation based on vague communication or from a subpar service or asset?”.

If it is the former the brand communication and/or webpage needs review to align communication and actual experience. If it is the latter it is vital to address the root cause of the shortcoming and to communicate this plan when addressing a negative review in order to potentially remedy the relationship.

Consequently, the response to a negative written comment needs to be swift, honest, outline the main concerns highlighted by the guest, and detail how they will be addressed in the future. However, these are negative promises, if the hotel then does not actually fix what caused the problem in the first place.

Taking a closer look – the worst ratings

In the context of our analysis we took a more detailed look at the bottom 20% of online ratings, those resulting in 1/10 or 1/5 scores. These ratings are the most damaging to a hotel’s online reputation – both due to their influence on the overall mathematical average score and by the often

detailed and scathing narratives that accompany them. These comments are the most damaging liability that operators and individual properties carry with them in their online heritage – sometimes for years.

A good sized hotel is the stage for many hundred thousand guest interactions per year: check in, valet, check out, restaurants, breakfast, banquets, etc. It is unavoidable then, that with the number of client interactions that a hotel’s staff handles on a daily basis, the service delivery will not meet guest expectations at times. Sometimes the hotel fails to deliver a reasonable expectation, sometimes a guest’s expectation is unfounded, based on wrong information or in some cases even unreasonable. When



► A single error by the staff, during an otherwise smooth hotel experience, can leave a negative overall impression



► **Guests intuitively understand that errors can happen, but they don't understand that they can't be fixed**

a service failure occurs, this is often at the origin of a negative guest comment.

Within these comments, there are of course a number of “off the wall comments” as well as some that are visibly intended to harm the property without cause. However, the majority of these comments have another common theme: guests' irritation (at times lividness) is due not so much to a failure in service delivery, but to the way that failure was handled by the hotels' staff, with the guests' feeling that no one took their problem seriously. Guests intuitively understand that errors can happen, but they don't understand that they can't be fixed.

Indeed, many narratives include common language such as “despite promising to follow up on my complaint, nobody called”, or “front office was unable to solve my problem because their policies did not allow for it” or “the employee apologised

but did not provide me with the confirmed room type”.

The right training for hotel staff

The root cause of why service recovery remains such a prevalent issue in many properties lies in training programmes which do not sufficiently acknowledge the possibility of service failures. Consequently they do not provide support to their employees in learning how to act in these circumstances.

Operators have excellent training programmes for delivering according to their brand standards, but many have not incorporated situational training modules into practice behavioural patterns for handling situations where service delivery failed. The training is focussed on “what should we do” rather on “what to do if we didn't do what the client expected us to do”. Hotel staff often understand the guests' problem, but neither have

the training, the empowerment and sometimes not even the support of a supervisor to handle the situation.

The response is according to the operators' Standard Operating Procedure (SOP), rather than according to the guests' specific situation.

There are, however, operators who have recognised this additional training dimension, and they have intuitively understood that situational behaviour cannot be trained by standardised schematics. Looking at these operators, as well as other customer-service-centric industries, three common constants can be identified:

Recruiting for attitude, rather than skill

A large part of recruiting is still strongly skills- and qualification-based. Pre-screenings focus on aspects such as past experience, ability to handle Property Management Systems, or formal education. These

aspects of course remain important but need to be supplemented by recruiting tools measuring a candidate's situational dexterity, i.e. ability to spontaneously and independently assess how a number of situations should be handled.

Empower employees and teams and remove fear of retribution

Policies, Job Descriptions and SOPs are the backbone of service delivery – they are helpful orientation aids to ensure that “all goes well”. However, when things do not go well, then they become a major impediment to swift service recovery. Employees who intuitively understand what would need to be done to remedy a situation and recover an unhappy guest are often constrained by rules preventing them from doing so. They might not be empowered to take decisions with financial implications for the property, or are required to refer them to a supervisor who may or may not be available. Or – in the worst of cases – they may be sanctioned by providing a solution to a guest that requires the employee to act outside their job description and may prevent them from completing other tasks.

A note to the owners

Service delivery is an area which owners expect operators to handle as part of their contractual agreement, a core service provided by the operator. While this is true, we would like owners to acknowledge that, every now and then, a property (and thus also its owner) would benefit from a training intervention that goes above and beyond the regular training activities and costs which the owner can expect the operator to incur on its behalf. In many instances it happens that the owner offers up financial means above their contractual obli-

PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), the multinational professional services company, have analysed the online reputations of more than 11,000 hotels in 48 cities in Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and India. The results show that there are large differences between the cities in how guests have rated their overall performance. There are also large differences within the cities, between the 3-, 4-, and 5-star properties.

gations for capex, e.g. for a new spa, a refurbished restaurant or a special suite. It is very rare that an owner offers financial support for out-of-the-ordinary training activities.

Just like an owner puts aside funds for the FF&E reserve, perhaps some might consider an RRR reserve just as beneficial – a Recruit, Retrain and Retain reserve.

Ideas on how hoteliers can make a change in service delivery

It has been found that negative reviews often offer great insight into the operational or capital-related issues that a hotel may be having. So presented below are some ideas for how hoteliers can better use this valuable (and free!) resource to make the changes necessary in order to delight their guests in the future and ensure loyalty.

Depending on whether the comments are asset- or service-related the

necessary measures will be different. In the case of physical issues, maintenance or renovations, communication is the key, because hotels ought to make guests aware that work is going on and that they should adjust their expectations accordingly. Otherwise, disappointment is inevitable.

The service-related issues are connected to processes, systems, or people. This means that hotels need to address the granularity or content, training, or controlling of standards in addition to related operating procedures and organisational structures to determine exactly which step in the service delivery chain failed.

An awareness of why service goes wrong therefore helps hotels to improve their service recovery processes. They can anticipate issues and work on making the service failsafe at the identified key points in the delivery chain. It is vital to involve cross-departmental teams in this process to ensure that the whole organisation improves and is aligned on meeting the customers' expectations better.

Three main learnings regarding online reviews

The three main lessons to take away when you analyse your hotels online reviews are:

1. Online reviews are a resource, not a nuisance. Use them wisely to sustainably improve your business and improve guest loyalty.
2. A written response is good, but an internal review and a commitment to physical or servicelated changes is what will keep you ahead of the game.
3. Management needs to coordinate responses across departments to ensure that employees are aligned on meeting guests' expectations now and in the future.



► The motto of the hospitality industry staff should be: work hard, play hard

HR POLICY

THE FUN QUOTIENT

Ways to keep hospitality entertaining and reinforcing the clear vision that it is fun to be in this sector

HOSPITALITY is a profession that makes its practitioners attend to long, prescribed protocols, look after nitty-gritty and a whole lot of responsibilities. It takes knowledge, experience and attention to detail, as well as being able to react at a moment's notice to a "change in flight plans," to safely and productively navigate the complex list of mandated policies and procedures, not to mention record keeping and having to manage a tremendous flow

of information. The tasks can come fast and furious at times. No matter the job description or level of our organization.

Moreover, caring for our guests takes a subtle blend of these technical skills, along with a keen understanding of human nature and a genuine interest in making someone's stay as accurate, comfortable and rewarding as possible. When done well, our capabilities and motivation are proudly on display.

However, as we are often reminded in life, all work and no play can dull the edges of that pride and motivation. There are many ways to break up the routine of hospitality, while at the same time reinforcing a sense of teamwork, involvement with community and, in a gentle way, instilling a healthy sense of competition. This article will explore ways to keep hospitality entertaining without going overboard, especially for those good people who serve our guests-rein-

forcing the clear vision that “it’s fun to be in this career field.”

Many Audiences

Whether we are interacting with guests, brand partners, vendors and suppliers, local business people or the community as a whole, working in hospitality is interwoven with the experience we create for these constituencies or audiences. In particular, this is a principle that we hear discussed more and more these days with respect to a wide range of guests. This means everyone from young adult business or leisure guests wanting their company's or their own travel dollars to yield more than a room, with or without a view, to seniors who don't mind some coddling and a watchful eye on our part making sure that everything is OK.

As such, many guests welcome being invited to participate in staff activities. For example, encourage the customer, when appropriate, to take part in the morning “huddle,” when we discuss what's on the agenda for the day ahead; or, maybe, join an impromptu hula hoop contest or mini-scamper hunt at the end of the day's shift. In this way, longer-term guests at an extended stay property or repeat visitors at any class of property can become part of the hotel's family.

It's also "entertaining" to surprise guests with extra treats in simple, yet memorable ways. This can be unexpected delights at breakfast time, say a complimentary serving of a special coffee cake that a staff member baked from scratch from a family recipe. Other examples include individual

guest surprises like an Anniversary gift basket placed in the room of a couple celebrating that special time in their lives together or a Get Well card and some treats for the family that is visiting a relative in a nearby hospital or medical center.

Serving well those who serve others. There are also many ways to keep our staff entertained. Often, this effort can begin through the human resources manager having team members fill out “More About Me” forms when joining our organization. Knowing one's favorite food, favorite sports team, favorite color or hobbies can help in picking out a gift or throwing a surprise event.

The range of ways to entertain staff is only limited by our imagination. Consider a Mardi Gras party, complete with Cajun style pastas and



► Once in a while, the hospitality workers should indulge in a gala party for themselves



► **Entertainment can play an important role in informal and formal staff recognition efforts and programs**

Bourbon Street Jazz for entertainment. Whatever your hotel's location, pay homage to regional history, food, dress, sports teams, colleges and universities, or music. Anyone ready for Breakfast on the Brazos, complete with river cruise, or a Texas Two-Step!

A bonus that comes with events like these is that they allow staff members to reveal their personalities and talents in different ways. Who knew that a front desk person who seemed so shy and reserved would become an enthusiastic performer and great singer on karaoke night? Or, that our maintenance specialist is a great athlete when it comes to a

pick-up basketball tourney.

Entertainment can play an important role in informal and formal staff recognition efforts and programs, including those in support of our brand partners. Examples include having a "field day" as a property's key managers wash their team members' cars or try their hand at prepping guest rooms - and we'll have the housekeeping staff fill out the score cards.

Special events also fit in great with national hospitality observances, such as International Housekeepers Week or Employee Appreciation Week for a national brand. Who doesn't like a catered lunch, silly awards and door

prizes? Keep a close eye on the calendars of the major national brands. Each holds many meaningful contests and award programs during the year that we can compete for in inventive and fun ways.

The serious side of fun is demonstrated further when we combine entertaining activities with contributions to our host communities. Maybe, we can see who does the best job in filling up backpacks with school supplies for local school children of need; or who can design the neatest poster for a community fund drive.

How about a prize for the team that paints the most walls when we volun-



► **Luxury properties can allow the staff to enjoy and participate in pool parties once in a while**

teer to freshen up the local charitable - but don't miss too many spots! We can stage our own version of the Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show when we invite staff and the local community to parade their pooches, demonstrating that our properties are family and dog friendly.

Formal programs of hospitality organizations that support the volunteer efforts of their people can bring together a good time, doing well for others and personal development. We are only limited by our spirit of caring

Let's Get Even More Creative
Of course, special times of the year like Mother's Day, Father's Day, Thanksgiving or Halloween are natural for events that are fun and bring our staff together. The more imaginative we are, the more memorable the celebration becomes. For next Halloween, who would like to volunteer to be our "honored guest" for the Mummy Wrapping Contest? Even astronomical milestones can make for

a great event. How many of us held Solar Eclipse Viewing Parties for our staff in 2017 when our property was in the near path of the eclipse?

Friendly competitions are another great way to keep hospitality entertaining. Consider contests among staff, per property or organization-wide, centered on goals like total revenues for a given period of time, the most sell-out nights, percentage staff participation or total volunteer hours for charitable causes, most days without injury, best service stories or guest satisfaction scores.

Then, add a theme for the celebration of those contests. Everyone can dress up in football uniforms for a Football Challenge, i.e. who crosses the goal line the most times by selling-out a given night of the week, with high-fives all around as the awards are given out. Another possibility is to emulate Academy Awards night or some other awards event, to include rolling out a Red Carpet for guests of honor

and having the master of ceremonies don a tux or the mistress of ceremonies a tasteful evening dress.

Whatever the chosen theme or format, keep it entertaining and make sure it remains a friendly competition.

Keeping It Real

Hopefully, this article will encourage all hospitality organizations to find creative ways to keep the work experience fresh and inviting. This doesn't mean that we should go overboard or somehow get the idea that we must constantly act out at our jobs. Everything should be in moderation.

Instead, the real purpose here is to acknowledge for your team members that their efforts are appreciated and that it's fun to work as a team toward common, important goals. These efforts need not be elaborate or involve great investments of time, money or staff resources; often, simple ideas or spontaneous forms of appreciation work best.

We must remember that not every property is a luxury boutique or full-service hotel where there may be more institutional forms of "esprit de corps" already in place or there is a requirement to maintain a certain level of decorum or elegance. However, for the great majority of properties under management, programs such as the ones outlined here are another way to give one's hotel a distinct personality or character. This management philosophy fits right in with current industry wisdom that we should do as much as possible, while working within and to brand mandates, to individualize a property and the guest experience.

All the world's a stage, and so is any hotel property. From our vantage point, our hospitality organizations can strike a great balance between performing to a high standard and having fun doing so.

KOLKATA MEANS BUSINESS

Latest Hotelivate 2017-2018 survey shows Kolkata witnessed its first positive RevPAR growth of approximately 3% in four years in 2017/18, registering an estimated occupancy of 72% and an average rate of about INR 6,100.



Kolkata, once the capital of British India, is currently in the process of re-inventing itself. Years of political flux held back both the city and its state in terms of commercial and infrastructural development; however, over the last decade, Kolkata has witnessed gradual progress, slowly driving it in the right direction and offering it an unconventional advantage over its coun-

terparts. The city's yet untapped potential presents it with the opportunity to establish itself as an efficiently planned hub for commerce, events and tourism.

Connectivity Kolkata possesses several attributes that can contribute to its potential success going forward, and connectivity is one of them. In addition to being India's gateway to the East and Northeast, the city is generally well-connected by air, rail and road domestically. Furthermore, Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose International Airport, which is the fifth-busiest in the country, links Kolkata to Bangladesh, Bhutan, China and Southeast Asia.

The ongoing northeastern expansion of the city is transforming its commercial and hospitality landscape. Traditionally, hotels in and around in line with the city's expansion, hotels have now expanded in the northeastern area of greater Kolkata.

According to the Hotelivate 2017-2018 survey, the city witnessed its first positive RevPAR growth of approximately 3% in four years in 2017/18, registering an estimated occupancy of 72% and an average rate of about INR 6,100.

In line with the city's expansion, hotels have now been developed across Kolkata, with specific focus on the northeast. Rajarhat and New Town are not only the most recent commercial hubs, but also house the newest hotels in the market. Moreover, Kolkata International Convention Centre and most of the upcoming hotels in the city are also planned here. Consequently, the city's hotel industry is seeing the formation of self-sustaining micro-markets in terms of supply and demand, the two major ones being City Hotels in the Central Business District (CBD) and Eastern-Periphery (EP) Hotels.

The fast-growing MICE has been the driving force in all the areas demand.

Here's what some of the heads of Kolkata's hotel industry has to say about the city's stellar performance:

ZONE BY THE PARK OPENS IN KOLKATA



The new hotel is strategically located adjacent to the Biswa Bangla Convention Centre

Apeejay Surrendra Park Hotels Ltd., entered New Town Kolkata, the upcoming business district in Kolkata, with the eighth property of its Social-Catalyst brand 'Zone by The Park' on February 18, 2019.

Zone by The Park Kolkata, the 117 room hotel is strategically located adjacent to the Biswa Bangla Convention Centre in the new IT and residential hub of Kolkata. Zone Kolkata will offer great food and beverage options to its guests. It has 3 banquet halls and 2 boardrooms making it ideal for weddings, conferences, events and high-powered meetings.

Bazaar, the signature restaurant of Zone, inspired by multi-hued charismatic native markets is located on the 3rd floor with 146 covers. The Bazaar restaurant with interactive service formats and LIVE cooking stations will give guests an unrivalled experience. The hotel also has two bars - The Lobby Bar, an exclusive bar at the lobby level and Tenlocatedby the rooftop pool with spectacular views of the surrounding city scape.

Zone by The Park Kolkata has 117 rooms is split into four categories. Zone has its presence in Coimbatore, Jaipur, Chennai ORR, Raipur, Bengaluru and Jodhpur with upcoming hotels in Gurgaon, Jammu, Jaipur, Goa, Amritsar and Surat.

IHG BRINGS SECOND HOLIDAY INN IN KOLKATA

NITINN SHARMA, THE GENERAL MANAGER OF HOLIDAY INN RESORT KOLKATA NH-6 SPEAKS TO MYSTIC EAST IN AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW:



Why did you choose Uluberia as the site of your new property?

Sprawling across 13 acres of land in Uluberia, a city that comes under the Kolkata Metropolitan Area, Holiday Inn Kolkata NH6 is strategically located to offer excellent connectivity to central Kolkata well suited to cater to leisure, business and MICE guests. The resort is an hour's drive from the City Centre and Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose International Highway and Orissa Trunk Road.

Is this property suited to focus on leisure or MICE customers?

The resort is well suited to cater to both leisure and MICE customers. Holiday Inn Resort Kolkata NH6 has

impressive meeting and banquet facilities along with beautifully landscaped lawns, especially suited for MICE and wedding guests.

The well-appointed 90 rooms and suites are naturally lit with modern aesthetics to appeal to guests looking for a getaway after a hectic week. The resort also has an outdoor pool and a spa for guests to relax and revive.

What are the salient features of the property?

All rooms come with different eye-pleasing views - lake view, pool view and lawn view. The private lawn attached to the lawn view rooms can be exclusively used for Bonfire or small parties. When it comes to the swimming pool view rooms, you can

directly access the pool from your room itself. The rooms have thoughtful amenities and come with an attached balcony.

The serene, calm artificial lake offers perfect rejuvenation from everyday hustle and bustle. The decks attached to the lake can be used for romantic candlelit dinner.

Separate bridal rooms are also available to prepare the bride and the groom for their special day for a fabulous wedding completion.

Furthermore, the property has three dining options offering excellent food and beverage selections. At the All-Day Dining restaurant, treat yourself to the best of international and regional cuisine. The resort's specialty restaurant will offer diverse flavour of North

Indian cuisine with focus on Bengali fare. The NH6 bar features a selection of premium wines and spirits.

What are the unique features of the resort that makes it stand out from other similar properties around Kolkata?

The unique features of Holiday Inn Resort Kolkata NH6 are - the swimming pool access rooms, the submerged pool bar, the 15,000 sq. ft. Amaya banquet overlooking 60000 sq. ft. Amaya lawn, discotheque with 25 ft. height, the dancing floor at NH6 bar and the temple. Moreover with IHG's excellent loyalty program - IHG Rewards Club, Holiday Inn Resort Kolkata NH6 stands out from similar properties around Kolkata.



Pramode Bhandari
Area General Manager, The Park
Hotels, Kolkata

OVERALL Hospitality Industry has shown steady growth and a positive picture in last couple of years. This positive trend is likely to stay. This has been possible due to better airline connectivity, improved infrastructure and extensive brand Bengal promotion by Government. This has made Bengal among the top ranked in the country in terms of foreign tourist arrival as well as domestic tourist footfall.

The Government and new luxury hospitality players have enhanced Kolkata's offering of quality rooms and large conference facilities to the global market. The Biswa Bangla Convention Centre which is the largest in South Asia is located in the futuristic smart city, New Town, Kolkata. This world class state-of-the-art convention facility has made Kolkata the new MICE destination in the country.



Manish Gupta

General Manager, Taj Bengal, Kolkata

“The eastern part of India continues to grow in terms of tourism, Kolkata being the gateway to this region has grown along with it. Moreover with better infrastructure, connectivity, adequate hotels, plus a brand new convention centre, the city is gaining prominence in terms of hosting International events. Now with the influx of newer inventory, MICE planners have started looking at Kolkata as a possible destination which was not the case earlier”.

Birgit Holm

General Manager, Hyatt Regency, Kolkata

WE are glad to see city developing above national average in spite of one of highest increase in supply. Demand was able to offset additional supply and this can be attributed to multiple factors. The key element which induced demand in Kolkata: Country had fairly stable political environment backed by state government development efforts, positive sentiments were witnessed across multiple industry segments such as IT/ITES, Audit, Manufacturing, Petroleum & Airlines, positive growth from US,UK, Bangladesh, China & Japan markets which indicates strong development in audit & manufacturing segments, positive effects of business due to GST reform during later part of year, further addition of premium brand inventory that helped city to strategized ADR, the city is witnessing a strong social demand and the medical segment looks buoyant, especially in the last two quarters (Q3-Q4)





Subhrajit Bardhan
GM, Swissotel (Accor Hotels), Kolkata

KOLKATA has shown tremendous resilience, with a sustained evolving path in the last year and the hospitality business has been able to leverage on the same trend. Needless to say, that this evolution has had an encouraging effect at the end of the year as it has come at a time when the Upper Upscale and Luxury segment in the city witnessed an increased inventory of 11% YoY and New Town experienced a growth of 54% YoY.

The city has started witnessing a makeover primarily facilitated by a change in the political ecosystem that

has fueled an agenda to promote Kolkata as a destination for the new millennium. The city and especially the North-eastern fringes like Rajarhat, New Town and Salt Lake look cleaner and well managed. Kolkata differentiates from most of the other metros in the country because of a state-of-the-art airport, an excellent road network and an efficient traffic management system. In no other major city in India can you commute at distance of 30 kilometers in just 45 minutes!

Kolkata has chosen the route of moving first with improving its infra-

structure so that it supports the arrival and stabilization of the industries. These initiatives are more prominent in the north eastern fringes of the city due to the availability of land for new developments, its accessibility from the airport, the easy connectivity to the rest of the city and the upcoming metro network.

While there has been exponential growth in the city's room inventory, there have also been a few emerging business sources that have generated demand for this city's increased appetite. Certain noteworthy drivers in this context would be the evolution of the North East states with tremendous potential for business and tourism, Bangladesh emerging to be one of the city's largest emitting markets post the stabilization of its socio-political environment.

A few other positive pointers that has started to yield fruition for the city's hospitality industry is its promotion as a MICE destination with the commencement of a contemporary convention center that is supported by a bouquet of hotels at various price points within its proximity. Medical tourism seems also to play an important role with the establishment of strong health-care infrastructure in the New Town area. The nationwide frenzy about sports events of all kinds and Kolkata's response to this trend with the refurbishment of the iconic cricket and football stadiums have also contributed to a significant business inflow from this segment over the last few years.

All these developments can only point towards a positive mood with high expectations from the city, with Rajarhat and New Town being in the forefront. And as for the hoteliers, we are delighted to ride this tide in the times to come.



Jagdeep Nambiar

General Manager, The Lalit Great Eastern Kolkata

REV Par is one of the most crucial metric to gauge the performance of a hotel and this has always been a top-of-the- mind aspect for The Lalit .Over the last few years with increased focus we have experienced a gradual and steady growth in the same .A growing RevPar for the city means that there is a very healthy demand in the city and an indication that opportunities are aplenty for those willing to grab them.

Kolkata with its rich and varied literary, artistic and revolutionary heritage is been a key destination for tourist who enjoy witnessing this rich diversity and in the recent past the advent of the IT sector has increased the traffic of the corporate footfalls in the city. These are two clear demarcation when it comes to a traveller making a choice and easy accessibility is a key differentiator. With the availability of space and a growing market this expansion is a natural phenomenon.

Rahul Maini

General Manager, The Westin Kolkata, Rajarhat

KOLKATA has seen increase in supply of hotel rooms over the last four-five years with influx of international hotel chains adding more than 1500 rooms which is a definite sign of gradual increase in demand being observed in the city. There are multiple factors bringing in the pleasant increase in business in the city of joy with aggressive marketing of the state across national and international platforms by the State Government trying to lure more foreign and domestic tourist alike. The government has been working on improving the infrastructure for large convention, MICE, Medical conference by bringing up international standard facility like Biswa Bangla Convention Centre. The newly developed Eco Park has been home to many international level exhibition bringing in new set of travellers to the state.

In addition to the above development in infrastructure we have also witnessed positive growth in business from key segments like sports and wedding boosting group visitors in Kolkata. Corporate groups are focusing on Eastern and North Eastern India as an opportunity to expand new markets and Kolkata being the Gateway to the North East is also benefitting from the current trend.

Rajarhat, New Town is perfectly situated between the airport and the city centre; this is fast emerging as a hub for premium budget to mid-scale hotels. The factors making Rajarhat, New Town a viable option for hotels are proximity to the airport, good connectivity. Also the MNCs and a large influx of visitors around the IT/Business hub of Sector V, make this area a preferred choice.



BIG DATA, BIG BUSINESS

It's not just for the IT industry, the field of big data analytics is transforming the hospitality industry

The term “big data” means many different things to different people. Generally speaking, it describes the collection of information – from both offline and online sources – to support the ongoing development and operations of a company or organization.

Data can originate from almost anywhere, including everything from historical records, point-of-sale devices and current consumer habits to customer feedback, referrals and online reviews. With so much information coming from all directions, it's tough to rein it all in and apply it a useful way – but that's where the discipline of big data analytics comes into play.

It's crucial to define big data when trying to understand its role in hotel and hospitality. With so many companies embracing big data and applying it to improve their operations, it might be the key to maintaining competitiveness in the future.

Relevant to hospitality

Big data has relevant applications in nearly every industry imaginable. To use this information to its fullest extent, it's important to know where

it has the greatest impact.

Customer categorization. One of the keys to maximizing profits – regardless of industry – is in the categorization and identification of incoming customers. Most experienced sales reps can gain a basic understanding of a customer's spending habits in as little as one visit, but even this can be misleading. To properly categorize a customer according to their potential for profitability, for example, proactive companies must track customer spending habits over time.

Personalized service. More companies are offering customized services to cater to their most valuable customers – either in groups or as individuals. But hotels can't always rely on internal data to predict a customer's return. Instead, data analysts have to collect data from surrounding, external sources to help identify travel patterns, habits and common timeframes.

Social media. In today's Internet-centric age, online communities are just as important as their traditional counterparts. Since many customers turn to social media for questions, issues and concerns, the platform provides a great opportunity to connect

Data can originate from almost anywhere, including everything from historical records, point-of-sale devices and current consumer habits to customer feedback, referrals and online reviews. With so much information coming from all directions, it's tough to rein it all in and apply it a useful way



► **Big data analytics has the potential to completely transform the hotel and hospitality industry across the world**

with consumers in brand-new ways. Air France alone has compiled vast datasets containing online search histories, completed bookings and even airport lounge activities on every one of their customers – more than 90 million of them. The data helps officials create personalized travel experiences for their frequent guests.

Yield management. Big data analytics also affects yield management. By calculating the optimum value of each room and factoring in metrics like seasonal demands, regular guests and similar trends, hotels can ensure maximum profits.

Regardless of whether hotels are

trying to classify their patrons with better accuracy, provide personalized services, engage their social media audience or stretch the value of their properties, they must use and apply all this data before it has an impact. The information on its own is dormant until activated through the disciplines of big data processing and analysis.

Big data analytics has the potential to completely transform the customer experience within the hotel and hospitality industry. It's not something that will happen overnight, but the industry is already making huge strides toward a full-on embrace of big data and all the advantages it has to offer.

Some of the most tech-savvy hotel chains are already adopting long-term strategies and policies for big data management. Those who are unwilling – or hesitant – might find it hard to compete in the coming years.

The Future

The niche of big data is still in its infancy, but it's already sparked storms of creativity and innovation in any industry it's touched, including hotels and hospitality. Even the most sophisticated of predictive analytics can't tell us exactly where big data is headed, but customers are sure to be pleased with the results.



► Collecting and analyzing Big Data help capture those travelers who are perfectly suited for specific products and services

Four Ways to Use Big Data in Hospitality

Hospitality marketers, in particular, should take advantage of Big Data to guide their efforts as they seek to reach diverse groups of travel consumers with widely fluctuating desires, needs, and expectations for travel experiences. These four tips are a guide for how to use Big Data to propel hospitality marketing forward and reach big picture goals.

1. Categorize Customer Types

Travelers are too widely varied for one marketing strategy to effectively connect with all of them. The successful travel provider, hotelier, or restaurateur picks a primary market and masters it. Collecting and analyzing Big Data will help capture those travelers who are perfectly suited for specific products and services.

The traditional business traveler on a budget looks for a comfortable room, convenient dining, and fast and reliable internet access. The bleisure traveler, on the other hand, is looking for the same budget-friendly amenities with added entertainment and luxury to pursue after their working hours. The average family traveling with young children wants a low-

cost, clean, and child-friendly facility. The honeymooning couple seeks to splurge on luxury.

Customers come with a myriad of expectations, from those who just want to grab a bite or a night's sleep and be on their way, to those who want to be thrilled by adventure or enveloped in luxury. Determine which specific travel consumers fit a business and use Big Data to identify the best opportunities to reach those people, draw them in, and exceed their expectations. This will also help to better identify one-time guests who are unlikely to return and those

Determine which specific travel consumers fit a business and use Big Data to identify the best opportunities to reach those people



customers with a higher overall lifetime value so hotels can focus more time and resources where they'll have the most impact.

2. Find the Highs and Lows

Analyze Big Data to identify peaks and dips in a business cycle, and use that as a guide to set appropriate prices for goods and services.

Savvy airlines, cruise lines, hotels, and others in the hospitality industry can use this information to their advantage to fill empty spaces for the best possible net profit. For instance, a cruise ship that charges



► Big Data will transform all sectors in the near future



► **Food delivery apps are among of the earliest products of Big Data business**

its highest rate yet sails at only 25 percent capacity loses money overall, compared to the ship that sails at 90 percent capacity with lower paying customers. The latter scenario creates a positive ROI, meaning more economical staff-to-customer and resource-to-customer ratios. The ship's going to burn the same amount of fuel traveling from port to port whether it's carrying a full load of passengers or not.

Consider the improved customer experience that comes from adjust-

ing pricing to fit demand. The cruise line with more passengers who paid an affordable rate will likely see repeat customers and receive word-of-mouth recommendations. Those consumers who enjoyed the trip with the other cruise line, but feel like they paid too much for the value received, may not use that cruise ship service again.

3. Cater to Relevant Customer Needs

Big Data analytics doesn't just focus

on existing guests' habits—it takes into account the catalysts that cause people to become guests. Capitalize on Big Data to anticipate travelers' needs in a timely manner, and tailor efforts to deliver to those who most need specific services during a given time period. This often means looking outside of internally-collected data and analyzing external factors such as sales patterns for related hospitality businesses or consumer opinions of competitors.

In his Forbes article, Marr provides



► **Predictive analysis focuses on what is likely to happen in the future**

the following example using economy hotel chain Red Roof Inn. When flight cancellations hovered around 3 percent, tens of thousands of passengers were left stranded every day. The hospitality company used data on weather conditions and flight cancellations to target customers who would find themselves searching for overnight accommodations on their mobile devices, and as a result, saw a 10 percent increase in business.

Then, there's data that goes beyond raw numbers. Qualitative data relies on customer feedback retrieved from customer reviews, social media, travel sites, and front desk personnel. Survey a group of target consumers to determine whether a hotel's services are actually fulfilling guests' wants and needs. The information collected can shed light on the traits that customers value and the issues that drive them away, indicating which services and operations hoteliers might consider adjusting. Those changes don't have

to be costly. Some can be as simple as enabling hotel housekeeping, kitchen, or banquet staff to anticipate a guest's needs and respond accordingly. The ability to anticipate and cater to customer needs results in those personal touches that yield higher reviews and increased business.

4. Ask the Right Questions

The "right" questions are those that probe beyond the obvious. Deeper analysis into what might appear to be unrelated information can yield insights that target a specific customer niche and increase sales. One way to check that the right questions are being asked is to first define the type of data analysis. There are three common types of data analysis: descriptive, predictive, and prescriptive.

Descriptive

Descriptive analysis focuses on past trends. This often shows evidence of results following changes in action,

policy, or property. For example, did adding a vegan menu really increase sales? Descriptive data helps a restaurateur determine that.

Predictive

Predictive analysis focuses on what is likely to happen in the future. The very nature of forecasting the future adds an element of uncertainty that business executives may not welcome. However, this type of analysis offers valuable insight, especially when combined with information yielded from descriptive analytics. For instance, predictive analytics may signal a peak season near the end of March for spring break, which would then incite increased competition for hotel rooms in certain popular vacation destinations. That knowledge may result in a hotel adjusting its rates to take advantage of the anticipated influx of customers.

Prescriptive

Prescriptive analysis involves advanced algorithms that process Big Data to suggest possible actions based on future occurrences. For instance, booking engines can personalize the online customer experience by using past data to predict a consumer's future needs, and then suggest and deliver a customized vacation package. Big Data is widely available to any hospitality business—from internal systems to publicly accessible forums. Once a business has centralized and integrated the Big Data needed, it can adjust accordingly to categorize a target market, reach consumers with the highest lifetime value, and exceed consumer expectations by anticipating and meeting their needs before they've even had time to ask. Isn't that what hospitality is all about?



► From backroom boys and girls to the forefront, chefs are the new super stars in the industry

F&B

HELLO, WHAT'S COOKING?

Today, it's very common to see Chefs interacting with the restaurant's guests. As the practice becomes prevalent in India we track its advantages to the restaurants

WITH the constantly evolving nature of Indian hospitality, the Chef's role has also undergone a makeover. Today, the Chef is more proactive. He comes over to the table, speaks with the guests, understands their priorities, comes up with suggestions and presents a meal.

The phenomenon is encouraged

by hotels as well as the standalone restaurants. More particularly, food and beverage managers encourage their restaurant chefs to interact with guests. It is an interesting fact that the industry is becoming extremely conscious of the need for this direct interaction between the Chef and the guest. India's hospitality players have inculcated this practice as an essen-

tial part of in the training process of Chefs.

Today, employers have also made note of bringing in more proactive and extrovert Chefs into the team to help initiate the practice among employees. Ensuring Chef-guest interaction has become an important criteria while recruiting new chef employees within organisations.

Rewriting the Chef's role

Prior to the implementation of this practice, most Chefs were confined to the kitchens. Due to this, most of the interaction with guests was done by the waiting staff. This resulted in misunderstandings. Thus, it became essential for the Chef to interact directly with the guests to ensure that the guest's requirements were correctly met.

With the emergence of the trend of Chef-guest interaction, most guests directly communicate their requirements to the Chef, who with his own expertise customises the menu to suit their needs. "Rather than a steward or a manager convincing the guest to try a particular food, suggestive selling practiced by the Chef has more

effect on the guests," says an Executive Sous Chef, of a Kolkata hotel. This also adds an extra 'wow factor' to the food and service, adds the Chef. "The Chef can also answer questions put forth by the guest that the waiter or the steward staff can't answer," adds another Corporate Chef of a Bhubaneswar hotel.

Interactions

While it is difficult for Chefs to interact with guests during peak hours, most Chefs try to find a way to solve the problem. As a chef at a five-star hotel in Kolkata says, "I always encourage my Sous Chefs to visit the guests. Once the practice is inculcated, it will help them to manage both jobs efficiently." This exposure is very

essential for the Sous Chefs who can then use it to their advantage when they progress in the industry.

This also proves to be very helpful for the restaurant, as the guest saves time deciding on his choice of food. The Chef proves to be more helpful than the menu card, since the guest can discuss his likes and dislikes.

"The Chef helps in setting the restaurant's image and standards," says T.S. Walia, a former President, FH-RAI. "He can also befriend the guest, make him feel comfortable in the restaurant and help him have a good meal." Besides, most Chefs believe that the uniform being primary, it is also their knowledge about the food being served that instills confidence in the guests. This in turn aids the



► Nowadays, the Chef helps in setting the restaurant's image and standards



► **It has become essential for the Chef to interact directly with the guests to ensure that the guest's requirements were correctly met**

restaurant's growth. The practice also helps meet the clients' diverse needs.

The new-age food

Today, eating out has become more of an experience for guests rather than merely a necessity. Restaurants strive hard to make this experience an

enriching one to help the restaurant's growth. Initiating Chef-guest interaction is an essential tool for the same. "The hospitality industry is all about catering to people. Unless the Chef interacts with his guests, he will not realise the needs and desires of the guests," adds Walia.

Contemporary cooking styles have helped in the growth of this practice. Most Chefs also believe that with more interactive culinary practices emerging in the industry, the scope for Chef-guest interaction has gained a boost. "Flambé, tandoor and teppanyaki prepared in front of guests also helps in maintaining transparency," says Ahmed. He feels that this can be also considered as a form of Chef-guest interaction. In addition, such activities helps in boosting the Chefs' confidence. Besides boosting sales, this also helps provide a memorable experience to guests.

Display kitchens were earlier confined to just the display of food. Today, the trend in display kitchens is about how Chefs explains the food's intricacies, which helps provide an overall experience. This can also be extended to buffet meals, where the Chefs can spend time explaining the meals' essentials to inquisitive guests. "This also helps in showcasing the Chefs' professional skills," says Singh.

The F&B perspective

It is often observed that the restaurant or the food and beverage (F&B) manager encourages Chefs to speak to the guests. This is primarily done to boost the restaurant's sales. This brings up queries such as why this role can't be filled in by the restaurant manager.

"The Chef and the restaurant go hand in hand. The Chef represents the food and thus, when the Chef asks or suggests the guests to try out something different, the guest agrees to it," says a General Manager, of a five-star hotel in Calcutta.

Boost sales

There are several pros to this interaction. Suggestive styling of the food and repeat clientele are the main out-

comes of this phenomenon, which leads to increase in sales. It can help the guest have an enriching experience in the restaurant. This will in turn make him eager for his next visit.

Successful Chef-guest interactions will ensure a good number of repeat clientele to the restaurant and can help build a loyalty base for the restaurant. This will also help establish the brand image of both the restaurant and the Chef. Thus it elevates the overall image of the restaurant.

Chef-guest interaction also proves to be of great help for the Chefs and the restaurant as a whole to learn about the guests' preferences. This helps create a database to record the likes and dislikes of the guests, which could later help ensure customised service to the guests during consecutive visits.

Ground reality

Feedback derived from Chef-guest interaction also proves to be extremely helpful in making necessary changes in the restaurant's menus. Changes include the introduction of new dishes in the menu as well as redesigning the menu.

However, the practice is yet to attract the attention of most restaurateurs in the country. With the evolving hospitality industry, it is also essential for the industry to adapt these measures to help in the growth of the restaurant's popularity. "As a customer in restaurants, I have rarely observed Chefs talking to guests, discussing the menu and making suggestions. Indian Chefs are not as extrovert as they should be," mentions Walia.

"Strangely, I have observed that Asian Chefs find it much easier to interact with foreign clientele than the Indian guests," informs a Kolkata-based chef of foreign origin. He

also adds that efficient training is essential to make the Chefs more confident in interacting with the guests. This will help raise the bar as well as help in the emergence of more celebrity Chefs and Indian signature restaurants in the global market.

Today, the Indian guest is more

aware of Indian hospitality than ever before. He is well travelled and more open to changes and innovative strategies. Thus, after watching the extensive Chef-guest interaction taking place worldwide, it's but natural that he'll expect the same from Indian Chefs as well.



► The practice of chef-guest interaction is yet to attract the attention of most restaurateurs in the country



STATE SURVEY: JHARKHAND

Momentum JHARKHAND

Nestled amongst the Chota Nagpur Plateau and dotted with lush forests that house an incredible array of biodiversity, Jharkhand has emerged as the surprise challenger in India's USD 42 billion tourism industry.





By projecting “Destination Jharkhand” at national and international tourist fairs, the state government has embarked on a recruitment spree to surpass the record 33.4 million domestic tourists who visited in 2014.

Jharkhand ranks ninth in India for domestic tourist arrivals, which accounted for \$94 billion aggregate revenue in 2015, and is expected to hit \$157 billion in 2024. International tourist revenue stood at \$20 billion in 2015, with growth projected to reach \$28 billion in 2024.

To bolster the travel industry, the Jharkhand government has devised a comprehensive policy not only to elevate the state’s appeal as a tourist

Jharkhand ranks ninth in India for domestic tourist arrivals, which accounted for \$94 billion aggregate revenue in 2015, and is expected to hit \$157 billion in 2024.

hotspot, but also to create jobs and boost economic growth. It’s also taken a people-first approach to the tourism boom by offering training to all service providers, such as porters, taxi drivers, hotel employees and others.

Having ranked seventh in the World Bank’s “Ease of Doing Business” in India report in 2016, the government has rolled out the red carpet to invite private investment in tourism infrastructure - whether foreign, domestic, or in the form of a joint venture.

One key element of the government’s tourism strategy has been to divide the state into six tourism circuits - Ranchi-Hazaribagh-Tilaya, Daltenganj-Mahuadandh-Netar-



► Pilgrims flock to Deoghar, the home of Baba Baidyanath, one of the 12 Jyotir Lingas



► **Caves, petroglyphs and fossil remains indicate the presence of prehistoric civilizations in Jharkhand**

hat-Ranchi, Ranchi-Bundu-Jamshedpur, Deoghar, Dhanbad and Saranda.

These circuits were created to build separate identities and individual marketing and promotion plans for each. By creating these six tourism circuits, Jharkhand's untapped investment potential is also on display.

Among the tourism niches prioritized for promotion: Religious Tourism

Pilgrims have long flocked to Jharkhand for its shrines and holy sites, such as Deoghar, home of Baba Baidyanath, one of the 12 Jyotir Lingas in India, Jagannath Temple in Ranchi and the sacred Jain site of Parasnath. With up to 40 lakh pilgrims

expected at Deoghar annually, the government will establish separate development authorities to maintain such spiritual sites.

In an attempt to provide the best safety and comfort for religious pilgrims, the state will provide tents, safe drinking water and garbage disposal for a stress-free pilgrimage.

Eco-Tourism And Rural Tourism

Blessed with waterfalls, rare flora and fauna, dense forest and a temperate climate, Jharkhand is an eco-tourism playground. Getalsund Dam and Usri Falls are just two paragons of the state's natural beauty. To exploit this natural beauty, the state plans to develop facilities and promote outdoor

activities such as trekking, wildlife safaris, camping, rock climbing and nature walks. Given the wildlife and landscape, a sustained effort is in place to encourage these activities in a sensitive manner that maintains harmony with the natural environment and its inhabitants. Visitors can explore and observe animals at various sanctuaries, national parks and wildlife reserves.

The government has also taken the unique step of encouraging recreational tree planting to both increase forest cover and introduce tourists to Jharkhand's rich forests.

This is part of the state's sustainable and responsible eco-tourism strategy to ensure that rural citizens are aware of and benefit from an increase in tourism. To ensure that Jharkhand's many tribal groups are part of the tourism plan, rural tourism villages will be developed with upgraded infrastructure such as drainage, bus stands, electricity and other basic amenities.

To give visitors a sense of authenticity, the government will also promote a bed and breakfast scheme that allows tourists to experience Jharkhand's hospitality and cuisine by immersing themselves in local homes.

Historical Tourism

Caves, petroglyphs and fossil remains indicate the presence of prehistoric civilizations in Jharkhand, as outlined in the Rig Veda, which mentioned the "Kikat" Pradesh in Giridih district. To provide a truly historical experience, a full-fledged revamp of heritage buildings and older mansions is planned to increase tourist accommodation.

The Indian Council for Cultural Relations and Sangeet Natak Akademy will also help organize a calendar of events and festivals to showcase



► **Visitors can explore and observe animals at various sanctuaries, national parks and wildlife reserves**

Jharkhand's multicultural history. These will help in marketing handi-crafts and hosting fairs to display local dance, music and other performing arts that highlight ethnodiversity.

Investment Opportunities in Tourism Infrastructure

The government has taken many steps to encourage private sector investment in Jharkhand's tourism industry, such as establishing land banks for smooth acquisition and categorizing land parcels. World-class tourist infrastructure, such as amenities centres, information centres, transport facilities and exhibition halls for events are all on the anvil. The government has roped in private sector partners to improve travel infrastruc-

Financial incentives apply to tourism initiatives such as setting up new hotels, amusement parks, health resorts, transport facilities, tourist camps and more

ture, such as roads, air connectivity and rail networks that will include a category of "super luxury trains."

Private sector involvement will also make road travel between tourist spots a convenient experience by providing petrol pumps, motor garages, snacks centres, toilet facilities, medical facilities, parking and more.

Financial incentives apply to tourism initiatives such as setting up new hotels, amusement parks, health resorts, transport facilities, tourist camps and more. Tourism initiatives employing at least 50 people - with a minimum 30 percent being from Jharkhand - will be rewarded with partial coverage under the state group insurance scheme. The state has also offered tax breaks to produc-

tion houses that complete at least 25 percent of their filming in Jharkhand.

Top 6 Places to Visit in Jharkhand

Ranchi

Ranchi is one of the best places to visit in Jharkhand that offers you the divine view of some of the best waterfalls in India. It is the capital of Jharkhand and is known as 'the City of Waterfalls.' Ranchi is one place, which is so rich in mineral resources that it is named as the 'Manchester of the East.' Surrounded by serene mountains and hills and swamped with heavenly waterfalls, Ranchi never disappoint its tourists and instead offer them the best sojourn to be cherished for lifetime. Some of the popular tourist attractions in Ranchi are: Hundru Falls, Dassam Falls, Jonha Falls, Panch Gagh Falls, Birsa Zoological Park, Ranchi Lake, Kanke Dam etc.

Palamu

This picturesque destination invites tourists from all over the country, especially from Kolkata, which is not very far from here. It houses a wildlife sanctuary and a national park and offers a great opportunity to the nature lovers, trekkers, and wildlife lovers and help them explore the luxuriant surroundings of the city. Palamu also has a rich cultural background, which leads to the popularity of the city amid historians and admirers of Indian culture. So, if you are in Palamu and want to explore its beauty, visit places like Palamu Wildlife Sanctuary, Betla National Park, River Koel, Palamu Fort, Upper Ghaghri Waterfalls, Lower Ghaghri Water Falls, and Lodh Falls.

Netarhat

This is a beautiful hill station in

Jharkhand, located at a height of 1,128 meters above sea level. It is frequented by a large number of tourists from nearby cities and town and is called 'The Queen of Chotanagpur.' The tranquil surroundings and scenic landscapes of this exquisite destination can steal your heart and blow your mind. Whoever is planning for a leisure holidays in Jharkhand to be away from the hustle and bustle of big metropolitan cities, Netarhat is just a right place. The cool and comfortable weather of this hill station is another reason why people like to visit it during the summer season. Some of the must visit attraction at Netarhat are: Netarhat Hills, Koel View Point, Sadni Falls, Magnolia Sunset Point, Ghaghri Falls etc

Hazaribagh

This picturesque destination largely contributes to the wildlife tourism

in Jharkhand, thanks to its abundant greenery, great hills, and lovely weather. Situated at an altitude of 2019 feet, Hazaribagh is a land of flora and fauna, well known for its health resort. As its name suggests, Hazaribagh means a city of thousand gardens, however, this doesn't mean the city has just gardens; there are several temples, hills, waterfalls, and wildlife sanctuaries that offer a delightful experience to the tourists. Some of the best places to visit here are:

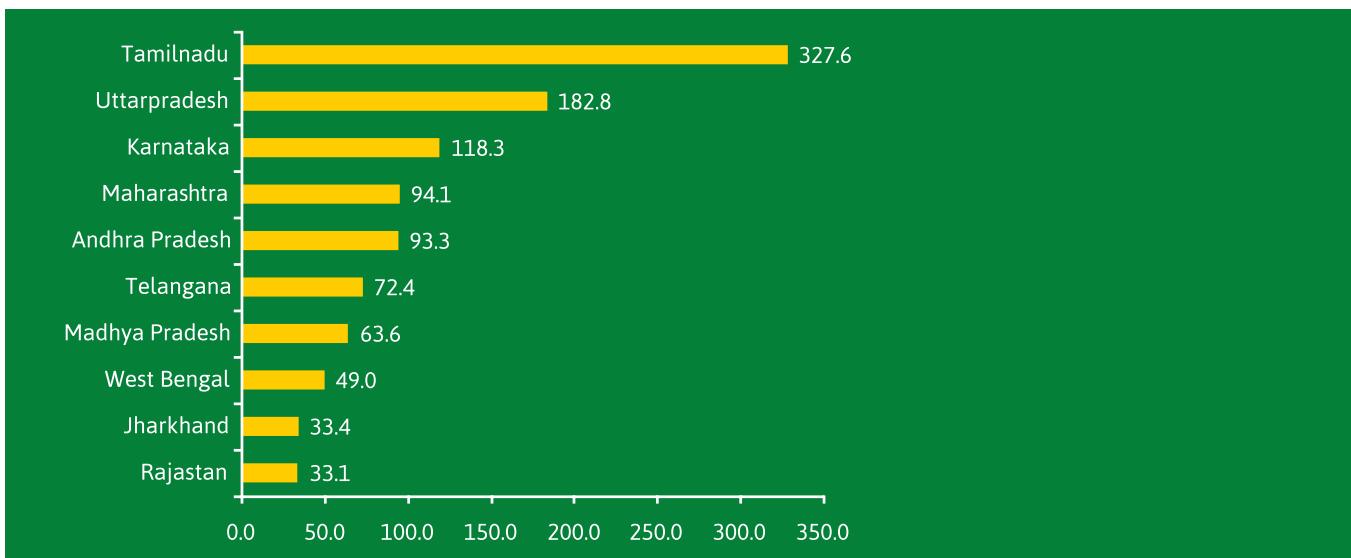
Canary Hill, Hazaribagh Wildlife Sanctuary, Hazaribagh National Park, Isko Village, Rajarappa temple, Konar Dam etc.

Deoghar

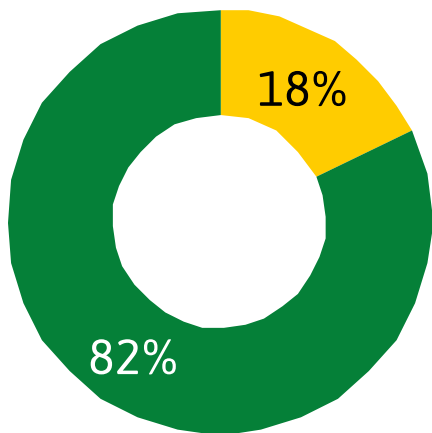
Deoghar is one of the best places to visit in Jharkhand, when it comes to religious tourism. With so many Hindu temples that are mainly dedicated



► Pic: Giridih is widely visited by Jain pilgrims and is often termed as 'The Land of Jain Pilgrims'

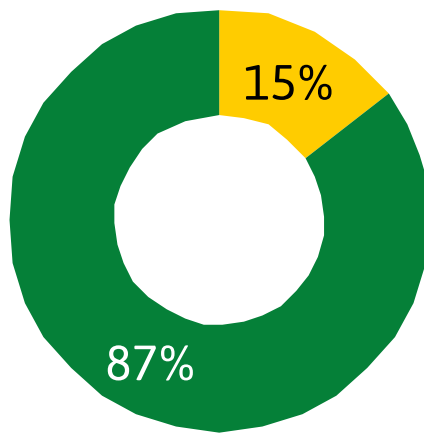


► Domestic Tourist Arrivals - 2014 (in Millions)



► Share of Tourists by Expenditure (2015)

to Lord Shiva, Deoghar promises its tourists a rather joyous holidays, thanks to its abundant natural beauty and tranquil surroundings. Deoghar has so much to see and experience that tourists from far across the coun-



► Share of Tourists by Expenditure (2024E)

try visit this place in a large number to explore its distinctive beauty. Also known for its ancient temples like Baba Baidyanath, which is considered to be one of the twelve 'Jyotirlingas' in India, Deoghar promises a divine

sojourn to people in search of peace and serenity. Some important places of worship & tourist attractions in Deoghar include: Basukinath, Trikuta Hills, Satsanga Ashram, Nandan Pahar, Hathi Pahar etc.

Giridih

Once a part of Hazaribagh, Giridih is now a separate city, which came into existence in 1972. It is known for its mining towns and verdant hills that are covered with lush green forests with a major plantation of Sal tree, bamboo, Semal, Mahua, and Palash. Also known as the 'Land of Hills,' Giridih is widely visited by Jain pilgrims and is often termed as 'The land of Jain Pilgrims.' There are several Jain Temples and various Jain buildings & sites in Giridih that makes it a desirable destination amid nature lovers and pilgrims. Beautiful valleys, charming hills, dams, and temples in Giridih contribute in the tourism in Jharkhand. Major tourist destinations in Giridih include: Parashnath Hills, Usri Falls, Khandoli Park and Dam, Madhuvan etc.



An invitation to become a member of
Hotel & Restaurant Association of Eastern India

*Yes, the benefits are
Royal*

- 👑 Immediate information of all changes/amendments in laws, bye laws and statutory orders relating to the hospitality industry
- 👑 Regular updates of happenings in the industry
- 👑 Participation in conventions, seminars and symposia
- 👑 Speedy accreditation of star category by the Government of India
- 👑 Redressal of day to day problems and grievances of members
- 👑 Receive complimentary issue of HRAEI bi-monthly magazine Mystic East
- 👑 Access to membership of FHRAI
- 👑 Two 20% and 30% discount cards for use at any member establishments of HRAEI and FHRAI, respectively



For more details contact : Atikram Gupta - 8585015172
HOTEL & RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION OF EASTERN INDIA
18A/1 Everest House, 18th floor, 46C, Chowringhee Road, Kolkata - 700071
Phone: +9133 2288 1742, e-mail: info@hraei.co.in

Expand your Reach



Reach out to a captive audience of major hotel and restaurant owners in 12 states and a union territory

Advertise in

MYSTIC EAST

HRAEI's bimonthly journal

Colour Ad Size	Rate (₹)
Inside Full Page	10,000
Inside Half Page	5,000
Back Cover	20,000
Inside Back Cover	15,000
Inside Front Cover	15,000

For advertising contact : Atikram Gupta - 8585015172

HOTEL & RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION OF EASTERN INDIA

18A/1 Everest House, 18th floor, 46C, Chowringhee Road, Kolkata - 700071

Phone: +9133 2288 1742, e-mail: info@hraei.co.in